

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 03639 111306Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-05 INR-10 /028 W
-----070096 111310Z /75

O R 111225Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO HQ US CUSTOMS SERVICE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1886
DEA HQS WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ROME

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CUSTOMS FOR FLETCHER I. POTTER, JR., DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS DIVISION

STATE FOR S/NM AND EUR/SE

DEA FOR W. LEAMY

ROME FOR CUSTOMS ATTACHE

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: SNAR, TU, US
SUBJ: US CUSTOMS INC EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM FOR TURKEY

REF: (A) ANKARA 0749, (B) CUSTOMS 1280 (C) ANKARA 3103

1. MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, DOGAN AKIN, INFORMED EMBOFF MAY 11 THAT MINISTER OF CUSTOMS AND MONOPOLIES, TUNCAY MATARACI, HAS WITH SOME RELUCTANCE AGREED TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO VISIT US IN CONNECTION WITH EXECUTIVE OBSERVATIONS PROGRAM. AKIN REQUESTED, HOWEVER, THAT INVITATION INCLUDE MINISTER'S WIFE. AKIN STATED THAT MINISTER WAS INITIALLY OPPOSED TO PARTICIPATION AND WAS ONLY CONVINCED AFTER PERSISTENT EFFORTS
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BY AKIN. AKIN STATED HIS PERSONAL OPINION THAT THE MINISTER WILL PROBABLY NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM IF HIS WIFE IS UNABLE TO ACCOMPANY HIM. HE ALSO SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE AN EARLY REPLY TO THIS REQUEST IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE CHANCES THAT MINISTER WILL CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT GOING.

2. AKIN STATED THAT IN TERMS OF FACILITATING THE PROGRAM OF

NARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH THE US, HE FELT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HAVE HIGHEST LEVEL MINISTRY INTEREST AND COOPERATION. HE HAD, THEREFORE, DECIDED THAT, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, THE MINISTER SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM (AND NOT DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY ERK, AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED IN REF C). AKIN ALSO NOTED THAT MINISTER MATARACI WAS AMONG THOSE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO WERE HIGHLY DISTURBED BY DEA HEAD BENSINGER'S CRITICAL COMMENTS ABOUT TURKEY MADE IN GENEVA. AKIN FELT THAT PERSONAL CONTACT WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS WOULD BE HELPFUL IN REMOVING MATARACI'S BAD IMPRESSIONS OF THE USG CAUSED BY BENSINGER'S STATEMENT AND WOULD INCREASE HIS WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT CONTINUED COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO CUSTOMS SERVICES.

3. ASSUMING THAT MATARACI WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM, HE WOULD LIKE TO ARRIVE IN THE US MAY 22 AND WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO STAY FOR ONLY ONE WEEK-TEN DAYS, ALTHOUGH AKIN WAS HOPING TO PERSUADE HIM TO STAY AS LONG AS 12 DAYS. AKIN SAID THAT IN ANY CASE, HE HIMSELF WOULD BE ABLE TO STAY FOR THE FULL DURATION OF THE PROGRAM.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT, IF POSSIBLE, INVITATION FOR EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM INCLUDE MINISTER MATARACI'S WIFE. SPIERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CUSTOMS DUTIES, PERSONNEL, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ANKARA03639
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780200-0336
Format: TEL
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780571/aaaaciex.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d0801fa1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 ANKARA 749, 78 ANKARA 3103
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2728844
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US CUSTOMS INC EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION PROGRAM FOR TURKEY
TAGS: SNAR, TU, US
To: TRSY
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d0801fa1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014